

1 THE HONORABLE JOHN C. COUGHENOUR

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6 UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
7 WESTERN DISTRICT OF WASHINGTON
8 AT SEATTLE

9 UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,
10
11 Plaintiff,
12 v.
13 ALMA VARGA,
14 Defendant.

CASE NO. CR20-0006-JCC
ORDER

15 This matter comes before the Court on Defendant Alma Varga's unopposed motion to
16 proceed with a guilty plea hearing by video conference (Dkt. No. 24). Having thoroughly
17 considered the motion and the relevant record, the Court hereby GRANTS the motion for the
18 reasons explained herein.

19 **I. BACKGROUND**

20 Ms. Varga has been charged with conspiring to distribute controlled substances and
21 possessing methamphetamine with intent to distribute. (Dkt. No. 1 at 1-2.) She would like to
22 plead guilty and proceed with the plea hearing by video conference. (Dkt. No. 24.)

23 **II. DISCUSSION**

24 Delaying Ms. Varga's plea hearing would cause serious harm to the interests of
25 justice. *See* W.D. Wash. General Orders 04-20, 09-20, 14-20, 17-20, 06-21. Under General Order
26 04-21, with limited exceptions, in-person hearings will not resume until June 30, 2021. While in-

1 person proceedings in the courthouse have begun to increase this month, the Court is still strictly
2 limiting the number of proceedings that can occur concurrently and the number of people who
3 can attend those proceedings. *See* W.D. Wash. General Order 04-21 at 2. Delaying Ms. Varga's
4 plea hearing and, as a consequence, her sentencing, by at least several weeks would cause serious
5 harm to the interests of justice because Ms. Varga has a strong interest in the speedy resolution
6 of this matter now that she has decided to plead guilty.

7 **III. CONCLUSION**

8 For the foregoing reasons, the Court GRANTS Defendant Alma Varga's motion to
9 proceed with a guilty plea by video conference (Dkt. No. 24) and ORDERS that her plea hearing
10 be scheduled before a Magistrate Judge as soon as practicable and be conducted by video
11 conference.

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13 DATED this 26th day of May 2021.

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A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "John C. Coughenour", is written over a horizontal line.

John C. Coughenour
UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE